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Sts.NATURE'S
COURSE

By NORA BRYANT

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Mrs. Humphrey shelled the peas in silence, waiting for the outburst. She was a meek little woman accustomed to listening to her beautiful, tall daughter and obeying her behests unquestioningly. Alice possessed all the independence of spirit which her mother lacked.

"No, mother," said Alice, setting viciously on a pea pod and breaking it open, "no, you can't. It just isn't born in you. I've got to do it alone."

"Why, Alice!" exclaimed her mother with hurt infliction.

"Oh, I know it, mother. I'm a horrid cross girl, but I can't help it. Father's gone off again and left us with no wood. This has been going on for three years now. Sometimes he remembers to buy a load, but when he does we have to split it. And in the meantime we have to scratch and scramble for wood just as if we were as poor as poverty. Just look, we've burned most of the fences till the place looks more ghastly than ever, if possible."

"Alice, Alice," sighed Mrs. Humphrey, "you shouldn't talk so of your father."

Alice's face flushed deeper and she shelled a handful of peas before replying. Then she looked out of the door at the jimson weeds.

"Everything is all wrong, and it's all father's fault. Why shouldn't I marry Bob Phillipa? Tell me that? Just because he is a college man and his people live in town has set himself against him. Now, why does father send me to college if he expects me to settle down to chopping wood and cooking for the rest of my life? No, mother. I'm a sophomore now and I know more than I did once. I am going to marry Bob and father is going to agree to it too."

Alice looked at her mother sternly. "See your hands, blistered and hard. You creep out and chop wood every time I turn my back. Look at my hands." She held up slender fingers. "Nice things to carry back to the college this fall! Now, I'm going out to chop enough to get dinner with." And, pulling a shade hat over her eyes, Alice walked out into the hot harvest sun and picked up the ax.

Strait up to the new brooder house she went and with a neat swing of the ax began battering up the brooder house door. In a few moments the door had disappeared and in its stead on the ground near by lay a neat pile of stove wood. Still not quite satisfied, Alice looked about her. A hayrack lay on the ground waiting for the afternoon trip to the oat field. A few firm blows from the broad of the ax, and the side boards showed signs of weakening. Half a dozen clever cuts with the blade, and the boards dropped to the ground. In five minutes the pile of wood by the brooder house was augmented by a pile of heavy sticks, and before Mrs. Humphrey could catch breath to inquire the source a brisk blaze lighted up the front of the old cooking stove.

A little after 12 Mr. Humphrey appeared at the door.

"Mother"—Mrs. Humphrey paused, with a bit of bacon poised on her fork—"mother, can you tell me what has happened to the old hayrack and to the brooder house door?"

Mr. Humphrey looked at Alice. "Why—why, father. I don't know. Alice, do you know?"

Alice poured the steaming peas into a china dish and then glanced at her father. "Well," she said calmly, "you will find part of the door still in the wood box, but the last of the hayrack is just going up the chimney." Then she carried the dish of peas into the dining room and set it carefully down on the table.

Then Mr. Humphrey began: "Alice, if you were not grown up I'd send you to bed for two days."

Alice squared her shoulders, looking into her father's eyes with an expression strangely like his own. "Father," she said, "you are not fair. You give your men the best sort of implements with which to do their work. You keep the horses and cattle in buildings that are for their greatest comfort, but you expect mother and me to find our own means for doing work that neither of us is strong enough to do and to live in a building that scorches us in summer and freezes us in winter. To say the least, you are not fair."

The great veins swelled in Mr. Humphrey's forehead, and he took a single step toward Alice and then stopped as if controlling himself by a physical effort.

"Alice," he said, "I forbid you to destroy any more of my property. Just how to punish you for what you have already done I don't know. I shall wait until tonight."

That afternoon Alice was left alone, as her mother was called away to see a sick neighbor. For awhile she sat quietly, then suddenly she flushed a little. Far down the road she could see the figure of a man and a horse moving leisurely through the heat. Alice smoothed her hair and glanced down at the dainty whiteness of her gown. Then she waited. Soon the rider turned into the yard, with an eager shout at the sight of Alice. A fine looking young fellow was Bob Phillips in his natty riding togs, sitting his saddle with the ease of a westerner. And a charming figure was Alice in the doorway with the color deepening in her cheeks, her dark eyes brightening and the dimples coming to the corners of her mouth.

"Oh, Bob," she cried as he dismounted.

ed and tied his horse. "I've been wishing for you. Everything is so topsy turvy in this horrid place!"

Bob looked anxious. "Is it your father again?" he asked as he drew her down on the step beside him. Alice told him of her morning's experience. Bob's face darkened.

"Look here, Alice," he exclaimed, "I'm not going to stand this. I knew things were pretty bad, but I never knew you had to do this sort of work!" He took her hand, looked at the pink palm with the row of blisters across it. "I'm not going to say any of the things to you that I think about your father. But this is going to stop! This architect business is stow in starting, but I've got enough to keep the pot boiling. I'm on my way out to the Scotts' summer home now. They want me to plan an addition for them. But tonight I'm coming back to tell you father that we are going to be married at once."

Alice shook her head a little fearfully. "No, Bob, dear," she said. "I can't leave mother that way, and I want to finish college first. No; father has got to change. There is no sense in his acting so to such a dear as you."

Bob grinned appreciatively as he drew her to him, but he lost none of his look of determination. "That's all very well, Alice, darling, but I've a few rights, and after supper I'm coming back and read the riot act to your father."

Alice sighed. Then she nodded her head. "Yes, come back. I don't know just how, but some way I'm going to shame father."

"Don't you worry," said Bob. "I'll fix him."

As Bob disappeared Alice's glance wandered toward the broad stump of a tree that stood in the doorway. As she looked her eyes lighted with a mischievous smile. Then she began her preparations for supper. In a short time she appeared in the yard with two covered dishes in her hands. These she placed on the top of the old stump where the sun blazed down on the shiny covers. Then she returned to the house to set the table.

The hay wagon rattled into the yard. "Well," called Mr. Humphrey, seeing Alice in the door, "isn't supper ready?"

Alice looked anxiously toward the old stump. "I'm afraid things have not begun to boil yet," she answered.

Mr. Humphrey looked at the strange array of utensils on the stump. "Alice," he said, "what nonsense is this?"

"It means just this," answered Alice bravely. "You refuse to buy wood for us and this noon you forbade me to destroy any more of your property. So when it came time to get supper the stump seemed the hottest place at hand, and I put the vegetables out there to let nature take its course. It is much easier for me."

Mr. Humphrey stood in silence. Alice watched him anxiously. Slowly the angry flush died away, and the corners of his mouth twitched. He turned to the man who had been an interested spectator.

"Tim," he said, "you might as well finish up the old hayrack. Split up enough wood to get supper with." Then he walked into the house with never so small a twinkle in his eyes.

That evening, as Alice and her father sat on the steps waiting for Mrs. Humphrey's return, Mr. Humphrey broke the silence.

"I've been thinking it over, Alice," he said, "and—and—well, I guess father has been negligent of his two girls. You see, I didn't realize how hard some things are for women folks. Now, do you suppose you could plan a—porch or a—a window or something?" he asked vaguely. "And we'll surprise your mother on her birthday."

For a moment there was silence; then he heard a low sob beside him. He reached out an awkward hand and drew his daughter toward him.

"Tim," he said, "I didn't know it meant so much to you."

Alice nestled against his shoulder. "It means more than a porch," she sobbed; "it means that, after all, you are nice, like other fathers."

Mr. Humphrey cleared his throat. "And I've been thinking, Alice," he went on, "that I've been hard on Bob. A rough old fellow like me gets prejudiced against these college chaps. When you finish school and Bob gets a start—well, you'll find that father wants you to be happy after all."

During a residence of many years among four different tribes of Indians I found, with very few exceptions, they were poor shots, either with the gun or rifle. When one considers that from young boyhood they have been in the habit of using a gun almost daily and their very living depends in a great measure on accurate shooting, their poor marksmanship is to be wondered at; nevertheless such is the case.

A good wing shot is a rarity among the Indians. The Montagnais of the Labrador and north shore of the gulf of St. Lawrence are no exception, and this in a country where most of the wild fowl are killed flying. It is admitted they kill wild geese and ducks while on their passage north and south, but this is only possible from the immense numbers of birds and a lavish expenditure of ammunition.

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